

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**STORM RELATED CLOSURES
AT POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE**

Some success on trail clearing was achieved this week prior to the arrival of weekend storms. However, most trails will remain closed through this weekend with the hope of having some additional trails opened by next weekend at Point Reyes National Seashore. Limantour Road will continue to remain closed to the public at least until February 27 since two major slides have undermined the road. Damage estimates at this time are close to \$1 million for the trails and Limantour Road. All backcountry campgrounds will remain closed through this weekend and crews are attempting to reopen them as soon as possible.

Many areas within the Seashore remain open to the public. Those areas include: the Bear Valley Visitor Center, Earthquake Trail, Cross Marin Trail, Bolinas Ridge Trail, Randall Trail, McCurdy Trail, Drakes Beach and the Ken Patrick Visitor Center, the Point Reyes Lighthouse and visitor center, North Beach, South Beach, Kehoe Beach, Tomales Bay State Park, and Samuel P. Taylor State Park.

Muir Woods National Monument has a partial trail closure on the Dipsea Trail and caution should be used when hiking to Muir Beach during high tide.

In the Marin Headlands, part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, all roads and trails are open with some minor slides along Coastal, Miwok, and Oakwood Valley trails.

These conditions could change as the weather becomes severe or tides overcome low lying areas.

(more)

Saw crews from Yosemite and Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area arrived this week at Point Reyes to begin the process of clearing trails with downed trees. The timing of this removal is important since the northern spotted owl, an endangered species, begins its nesting season at the beginning of March, and the noise of chainsaws could disrupt the owls nesting habits. Point Reyes has the highest density of northern spotted owls in their range. "Even though we are trying to open trails to the public as quickly as possible, we also have the duty of preserving the resources in this extraordinary National Park." stated Frank Dean, Assistant Superintendent.

Elephant seals were severely impacted by the recent storms. Prior to the storms, the population of seals numbered nearly 700, 300 of which were newborn pups. After the series of strong Pacific storms, the total colony is now less than 150 animals and there are fewer than 50 pups. This is due to strong surges in the surf that either batter the animals against the rocky cliffs or sweep the weak animals out to sea. As breaks in storms occur, some seals are returning to Point Reyes Beaches North and South for shelter. These beaches will have temporary closures to dogs until March 15 to allow the seals a safe haven from the storms during the pupping and breeding season.

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